

# **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

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## **APPLICATION OF A COMMERCIAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE TO MILITARY C4I SYSTEMS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

**Jeffery W. Hoyle-Commander, United States Navy**

**B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1985**

**M.S., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1986**

**M.B.A., Chaminade University of Honolulu, 1993**

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**Advisors: Walter E. Owen, Graduate School of Business and Public Policy**

**CAPT Frank E. Unetic, USN, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command**

Successful commercial companies understand that customers are the real experts with regard to their products and services. Bringing customer experiences right into the design shop allows development of best-selling commercial products and services. Companies such as L.L. Bean, Inc. immerse themselves in their customer's experiences during new product development. They travel to their customer's location and listen to them face to face to get the best possible input for essential product requirements and new design ideas.

Currently, most military C4I systems product development does not make effective use of customer input. Systems are developed and fielded in accordance with Department of Defense regulations that provide insufficient mechanisms for users to influence product requirements and design. C4I system program managers need additional tools to obtain and translate user needs into system requirements and designs.

Harvard Business School has developed an educational program aimed at redesigning product/service development based on the L.L. Bean model. This thesis will apply the tenets of that program to submarine C4I systems development and identify obstacles to and lessons learned from its application to military product development.

**KEYWORDS:** Product Development, Commercial Best Practices, Voice of the Customer, C4I Systems Development

